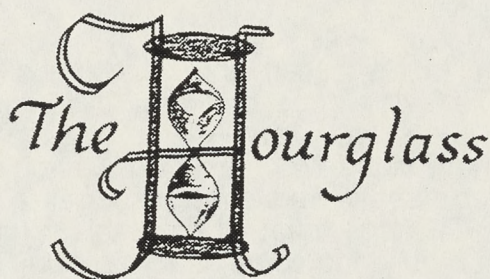


Historical Society of Palm Desert

P.O. Box 77

Palm Desert, CA 92261

(760) 346-6588



Community

Service

Collections

Archives

SUMMER 2003

VOL. 11, NO. 2

MARIAN MARSH HENDERSON

Information gleaned from the Society's archives

To residents who are aware of Palm Desert's history, this lady needs no introduction. Yes, she is a pioneer, but let's start at the very beginning. Marian was born in Trinidad, British West Indies and lived there till she was four years old. At that time the family of six migrated to the United States and settled in Boston, Massachusetts. Her father was a chocolate manufacturer and later decided to go west to California and set up business in Long Beach. There Marian attended Hollywood High School.

Visits to the desert began in the late 1920s, when she would come with her brother, Tony, to hike the canyons and mountains. They also enjoyed water skiing at the Salton Sea. Her older sister was an actress, and one tag-along experience resulted in Marian's being noticed by John Barrymore for her voice quality and near-perfect diction. This led to her first role in a movie, playing "Trilby" in the classic story "Svengali" in 1930. While still in her teens, Marian was one of the first to join the Screen Actors Guild. Also, she joined the lovely starlets who enjoyed weekends and vacations at the El Mirador Hotel in Palm Springs.



1968

Marian met Howard Hughes when he chose her for a bit part in "Hell's Angels." After that they sometimes dated when they both happened to be in the desert. Hughes had a white Cord convertible and they would drive on roadless sand to an elegant restaurant on Date Palm Drive which had back-room gambling. Her brothers would have to tow them back to Palm Springs because the Cord had a habit of breaking down.

At age 17 the beautiful Marian Marsh starred in her second movie, a 1931 film titled "The Mad Genius" again with John Barrymore. These roles brought her quite a lot of recognition. She later co-starred with Edward G. Robinson, William Powell, James Cagney, and others in over 40 films. She was the first American actress to make films in England. Her screen career lasted till 1952.

During this time she met and married Albert Scott and had two children, a boy and a girl. The relationship lasted for 19 years, while Marian continued in her work as an actress. Also she founded a beautification group in both Chatsworth and Rancho San Antonio. Another project to her credit was a school for boys who were in trouble, hiring 35 of them herself and encouraging other ranchers to do the same. Always active, she also set up housekeeping and grooming classes in a home for girls.

In 1960 Marian came to the desert and married a flier and war hero who was busy developing Palm Desert with three brothers. Clifford and Phillip were very close and worked together, Carl was a realtor, and Randall was the editor of Desert Magazine and ran a publishing plant. The Shadow Mountain Club was off to a running start, being the place where many townspeople and visitors chose to socialize. Into this picture came Marian and her two children, and Cliff took them all under his wing and they lived in their home on Pinyon which was just around the corner from the club. Traveling was an enjoyable part of their years together, until his death after 25 years of marriage.

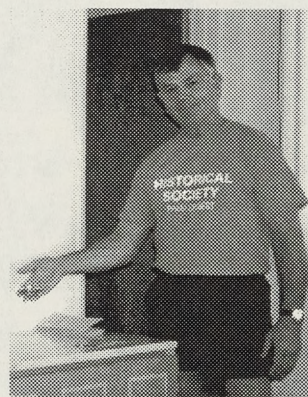
Many of the desert pioneers from that era got to know Marian, and it soon became evident that her penchant for community involvement had not been left behind. In 1962 she founded "Desert Beautiful", a beautification project that eventually encompassed 15 communities in the Coachella Valley. The idea was triggered by Jackie Cochran, a pilot who was very irate about all the litter she saw strewn around the desert as she flew over. Since Marian believed there was no reason for "visible pollution", and as president of the new organization she first got rid of all the old cars in Cathedral City. For almost 40 years she has enforced the motto "pick up, fix up, paint, and plant" with a faithful band of volunteers. An ambition, which she has not yet seen fulfilled, is to have lighted palm trees line the 152 miles of highway from the ocean to the Salton Sea.

For 11 years Marian served on the boards of Desert and Eisenhower Hospitals, was honored in 1973 by the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, and worked with United Way for many years. She was a recipient of a 1994 Inspiration Award.

Marian Marsh Henderson's desire to treat the environment with respect sets a goal for all of us. Pride in the beautification of our homes and businesses is one of the aspects of the atmosphere in which we all desire to live and work. History moves on, so we can't go back to the 60s when Marian came to the desert as a full-time resident; but one wish she has expressed might give us food for thought to return to the times of good behavior, well-dressed people and not having to lock doors.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you seems so inadequate; but it must be said. I am especially grateful to our members who have stepped up to fill the many leadership and worker roles without which our activities could not happen. Two open houses welcomed hundreds. Under the direction of Bud Lesser the "Picnic in the Park" was a great success. With a pro like Jean Hollenbeck running the show, we expected and received a very enjoyable Spring Luncheon. The booth at Springfest 2003 was very ably organized by Barbara Keedy Eastes. Fire truck owners brought a 1934 Chevy, a 1948 Dodge, a 1951 La France – all antiques to die for. Chairperson Lois Bradstreet and her team of helpers set up a lovely table spread with homemade cookies and lemonade.....creating a challenge for anyone who follows in her footsteps. Kay Young has volunteered to chair the Yard Sale in September.



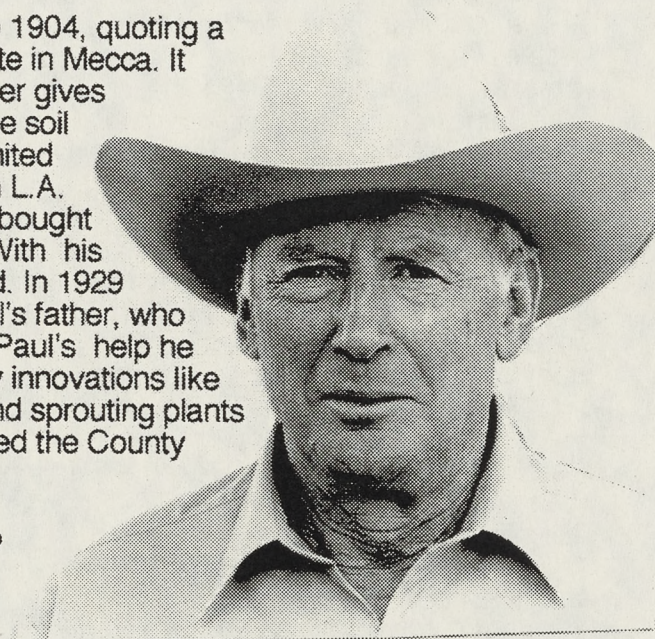
Lest I forget anybody, my "Thanks to ALL." Also, new members are showing strong. Rose & Brett Romer, Ernie & Gloria Petitto, John & Madonna Marman are but a few. Being your president is a breeze with people like you helping out for a meaningful cause, having some fun meeting new friends and stretching out a bit.

Hal Rover, President

PAUL AMES speaks at Spring Luncheon **"The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same"**

On April 16 the luncheon was held at Desert Falls Country Club. A prime rib meal set everyone in the mood to buy raffle tickets and listen to a pioneer farmer who is one of only a handful who have survived the challenges associated with over 40 years of transforming this raw desert into its present state of development.

Paul Ames began by going all the way back to 1904, quoting a booklet printed to promote the agricultural climate in Mecca. It read: "The quality of soil and abundance of water gives assurance of greater profit in the cultivation of the soil than is offered in any other section of the United States." With a little money from his suburban L.A. grocery store Ames' grandfather, E. B. Ames, bought 80 acres of sagebrush and moved in 1914. With his artesian well he grew grapefruit and alfalfa seed. In 1929 he turned the farm over to his son George, Paul's father, who struggled through the depression years. With Paul's help he raised a variety of crops and made note-worthy innovations like icing sweet corn, operating a packing house, and sprouting plants in electrically heated hot beds. He also managed the County Fair and boat races on the Salton Sea.



After the air force and college Paul submitted to the call of his genetic background and moved to the valley in 1949. It wasn't easy, but he persevered. In 1957 he invented the process of lining farm reservoirs with plastic film, and he was selected as one of America's four Outstanding Young Farmers in 1958. Ames supplements his farm income with his international plastic lining business, a pipe and supply business, and real estate ventures. Three times he's avoided bankruptcy.

Today agriculture brings a half-billion dollars into the valley's economy with 50,000 acres under cultivation. Paul says that things have changed in the past 100 years; but they stay the same because of innovative people with "vision, guts and good timing."

JOYCE WHITE **"2003 Volunteer of the Year"**

This award was presented to Joyce for service beyond the call of the duties of a person who is working for the Society out of the goodness of her heart. Besides being Vice-President of the Board of Directors, she rewrites by-laws, helps with the archives, and has taken on the total responsibility for the blueprint project which involves hours of sorting, doing mailings and follow-ups. The presentation was made at the Spring Luncheon.

P.D.P.O.A. Blueprints

If you receive a postcard in the mail telling you that we have the blueprints for your house, please call the office (346-6588) and purchase (a tax-deductible donation) the prints. Having them can save you thousands of dollars in architectural fees, and they are great for locating plumbing and electrical lines. This is one of our on-going fund-raising projectsthanks to Joyce.

DAN & BJ CALLAHAN

Founder's Day Celebration

Last year the Board of Directors of the Historical Society voted to honor these two deserving people with the 2003 Founder's Day award. On the traditional day, May 15, friends and Society members gathered in the community room of the library on Fred Waring Avenue. Attendees came early to socialize and chatting was in high gear.

President Hal Rover gave a short history, read letters from Tim & Kyle Callahan, and recognized past recipients. Ken Roberts, last year's awardee, did the presentation. Bj talked about her years as a teacher at Palm Desert School and about the 10 years she and Dan chaired the Society's main outreach program, Mini-Muster Fire Safety. Dan brought in snatches of history and recognized many in the audience in his own inimitable manner, resulting in the usual rounds of laughter. Councilmen Bob Spiegel & Dick Kelly, Doris Wilson of Desert Sands, and Chief Walt Holloway from Station #33 spoke.



An overflow crowd of 90, a warm and friendly atmosphere, many renewed acquaintances and new ones formed made for a totally enjoyable event. Thanks to all who attended.

Historical Society of Palm Desert, President Hal Rover,
Board of Directors

May 16, 2003

Dear Friends,

Thank you for selecting us to receive the Cliff Henderson Founder's Day Award. It is a very special honor.

We have always been proud to be Historical Society of Palm Desert members. Serving and working with fellow members has brought years of pleasure and satisfaction.

Thank you all for the lovely reception, as well as the effort expended to make it so memorable.

Most Sincerely,
Dan and Bj Callahan

DOCENT TRAINING / LUNCHEON

Jean Ernst is whipping her Volunteer Committee into a fine-tuned machine. If you are interested in docent work in your spare time, please call the office at 346-6588 and let Ann know that you plan to attend this meeting.....

June 10, Tuesday 10 a.m. till noon Ye Old Firehouse
Louise Neely, Coachella Valley Museum & Cultural Center will speak:
"Growing Up at Point Happy"

Do you know: How Cathedral City got it's name?

When Col. Henry Washington and his surveyors were establishing the San Bernardino Base and meridian line in 1852, they named landmarks along their routes. The first important canyon in the Santa Rosa range west of Palm Canyon, they called Cathedral. So it was natural that the original townsite be named Cathedral City.

Deceased Members

Rosabel Olson worked with her husband, Don, in running their restaurant on Washington in Palm DesertDon O's.

Marilyn Hamlet was an active member of many local organizations. She was the President of the Palm Desert Country Club Association.

New Members

Poul & Birgit Moller.....Life
 John & Madonna Marman.....Contributing
 * Master Pools & Spas.....Business
 * Randal's Plumbing, Inc.....Business
 Gary Homec.....Supporting
 Madeline Kuhn.....Supporting
 Joyce Nelson.....Supporting
 Brett & Rose Romer.....Supporting
 Leon & Charlotte Schovaers.....Supporting
 Glenn & Claudia Bell.....Family
 Stan & Carole Cole.....Family
 William & Wilda DeHart.....Family
 Gerald & Dolly Dupree.....Family
 Jerry & Ann Gibson.....Family
 Jane Joukovsky.....Family
 Whitney & Loraine Lyon.....Family
 Carlos & Rose Mary Ortega.....Family
 Galen Wilkes.....Family
 Cathleen Brant.....Individual
 Mrs. A. D. Disney.....Individual
 Harriet Emerson.....Individual
 Alibaba Farzaneh.....Individual
 Barbara Fossett.....Individual
 Ann Japenga.....Individual
 Iris Miller.....Individual
 Marguerite Stetson.....Individual

* Please patronize our business members.

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Note: As you can see, our membership drive is showing great success. Keep up the good work - ask a friend to join !!

Annual Dues:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Life..... | \$1,000 |
| Patron..... | \$250 |
| Contributing..... | \$100 |
| Business: new \$75.....renewal \$50 | |
| Supporting..... | \$50 |
| Family..... | \$25 |
| Individual..... | \$20 |

Upcoming Events

Sept. 14 - Board Meeting, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 15 - Fall Luncheon/Annual Membership Meeting
 Oct. - Mini-Muster Fire Safety Project
 Oct. 25 - Fire House Yard Sale
 Nov. 2 - Golf Cart Parade

Fire House Yard Sale

Thanks to Waste Management of the Desert for providing a large container again this year, we can store the things that will be on sale in the Fall. We have already begun to collect saleable items and this activity will continue all through the summer. If you see someone having a yard sale, stop and ask if the Society can have their left-overs. If they agree, get their name/address/phone number. Call Dick 340-0828, Hal 346-1967, or the office 346-6588 for prompt pick-up. Remember, no clothing or shoes. Tax-deductible receipts will be given upon request. Let's make this event the biggest and best !!

Donations

Don & Pat Callahan.....yard sale items
 Gordon Roberts.....March '58 Sun Spots
 Mary Scott.....'76 & '79 flood articles
 Brad Fenison.....photo disc
 Robert Corey.....Sandpiper aerial photo
 Eileen Rickard.....articles & brochures
 Bud Lesser.....8 archival items & 18 books
 Ginny Mullins.....30 archival items
 Dr. William Kroonen.....175 archival items, 13 photos, 1 video, 4 exhibit items on Palm Desert High & McCallum Theatre
 Al Flogge.....Marian Marsh memorabilia: a film list & 40 copies of photos
 Paul Ames.....1904 Mecca Agricultural booklet
 Theresa Pawley.....thanks for the loan of Dr. Pawley's manuscripts

Society Office Hours

Mon./ Wed./ Fri. - 10:00 am till 3:00 pm
 2nd & 4th Sat. - noon till 3:00 p.m.

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The office will be closed during July & August, except by appointment.
 Yard Sale collecting = all summer.

Sandpiper Reception

On April 12 the Society held a wine & cheese reception for Sandpiper residents and desert modernism architecture enthusiasts. Our thanks to Jim West and Karen Prinzmetal for setting up the entire exhibit in the west wing of the fire house. Bill Krisel, who originally designed the project, was also in attendance to greet visitors.

Springfest 2003

The Society sponsored a booth at April 6 event. Members manned the booth from 11 am to 4 pm. Bob Green brought an antique vehicle and invited three collector friends Doug Hammer, Brad Hammer and Bill Horton to do the same.

Society Interaction

Riverside County, La Quinta & Cathedral City have used our facility for meetings, and field trips. We welcome the opportunity to make these contacts for our mutual benefit.

Ed Mullins Memorial Picnic

This March 30 event was a rousing success! To bring back some of the good-old-days foodwise, Barbara Keedy Eastes and her brother Doug Keedy cooked burgers 50s-style just like their dad, Bob, served in his restaurant for years. Some of the local government officials enhanced the affair with their presence. Ginny Mullins was interviewed by the media. A raffle added a little spice to the affair. It was a tribute Ed would have enjoyed.

THANK YOU, ANNE & ANGIE

These two ladies excel, especially when there is food preparation involved at our events. Anne Tuttle is our office manager, but she volunteers lots of time. Angie Rover, President Hal's better half, also serves beyond the call of duty. We are so grateful to the two of you.

Have a great summer !!!

Ginny Folkers, Editor